



**Department of Rehabilitation Services**  
**Testimony before the Program Review and Investigations Committee**  
February 27, 2015

Good afternoon Senator Fonfara and Representative Carpino and distinguished members of the Program Review and Investigations Committee. My name is Amy Porter and I am the Commissioner of the Department of Rehabilitation Services or DORS. I am offering this testimony on House Bill 6737, An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Program Review and Investigations Committee Concerning Transitional Services for Youth and Young Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

The Department of Rehabilitation Services is very interested in the targeted work of your committee in the area of Autism Services for Transition-Aged Youth. We were pleased to have the opportunity to talk with the committee staff about these issues and to see the final report. We applaud the Committee's great accomplishment in assembling so much research and insight into this important and evolving area of public policy.

One of the recommendations of the report - and Section 4 of the bill before you - says "[t]he Commissioner of Rehabilitation Services, in consultation with the Commissioner of Education, the Commissioner of Mental Health and Addiction Services, the Commissioner of Developmental Services and the Labor Commissioner ... shall develop a definition for 'competitive employment' to be used by each agency in relation to state matters."

While we certainly understand the committee's intent to harmonize state efforts, we want to bring your attention to the fact that at least two of the named agencies have a definition driven and controlled by federal law and, further, those definitions are not the same. We suspect that neither agency would have the authority to change their federal definition, so any new state definition would be an additional one and might constitute more reporting and tracking requirements for those agencies. The committee may want to consider this potential impact and add the words "where possible" after the words "shall develop a definition for 'competitive employment' " in line 88.

I want to thank the Committee for your attention to this important topic. We are, of course, available for any further consultation in this matter.